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TAGS: PARM PINR PINS PREF PREL PTER TBIO EG
SUBJECT: SCIENTIST REDIRECTION PROGRAM - EGYPT'S ROLE

REF: STATE 80326

Classified by ECON COUNSELOR CHILL-HERNDON FOR REASONS 1.4(b)
and (d)

¶1. (S) In support of the Iraqi Scientist Redirection Program, Post recently secured initial visa approval for two Iraqi scientists, Dr. Anton Al-Banna and Dr. Al-Abbas Obaid, to do one year fellowships at NAMRU-3, the U.S. Naval Medical Research Unit in Cairo. Securing these visas required extensive advocacy and follow-up with the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and State Security. Based on our experiences in obtaining visas for these two scientists, post believes Egypt will not be inclined to grant additional visas to Iraqi scientists under this program in the foreseeable future.

¶2. (S) Dr. Al-Banna is a US-educated (Cornell University) veterinary pox virus expert and professor of virology at the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Baghdad. Dr. Obaid is a UK-educated professor of infectious disease and immunology and Assistant Dean at the College of Medicine within the University of Baghdad. During their fellowships, both will receive training in real-time PCR and molecular diagnostics to support NAMRU-3's research and surveillance efforts throughout Africa, the Middle East, and Southwest Asia.

JONES